In light of lost cities, do you still trust the ground?

If there were no birds, who is left singing?

Do you trust the sky?

What objects do you pull from the water?
JOODALTHUKAIR
IS A WRITER, EDITOR,
AND FOUNDING EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF SUMOU, AN ARAB MAGAZINE, PLATFORM, AND COMMUNITY.
Send flowers to a part of your self that perhaps is no longer accessible to you. Bless it, lay it to rest with an offering.
Fatima (she/they) is an Iraqi writer and public health consultant in Southern California. Their work can be found in Rusted Radishes, BAHR, and written in the sand at Belle Isle Beach.
Follow your senses to find a story.

Is there a particular plant that draws your memory?

Describe the feeling inside your body.

What are the sounds?

Taste like?

What does it smell like?

What does it feel like in Teta’s kitchen or garden?

Write about how it feels.
Layla lives between her ancestral village on the northern coast of Lebanon and her diasporic home in Tongva-Tataviam territories (Southern California), where she was born and raised by her immigrant family. She is a cultural worker and plantcestral medicine practitioner focused on the re-memberance of baladi (land-based/folk/indigenous) lifeways and ancestral wisdoms from SWANA*. Her dedication is to stewardship of our earth’s eco-cultural integrity and the many layers of relational restoration and healing that entails.

You can learn more at www.RiverRoseRemembrance.com // River Rose Remembrance on IG + FB, and visit the online community archival project she hosts at www.SWANA ancestral HUB.org // @swana.ancestral on IG.
Enter into a conversation with your own shame. First, identify its shape, its origins, where it’s felt, how it moves in your body, who shares it with you.

Write a poem as a doorway out of it. Take a few tentative steps or wild leaps.

Write with the confidence that you will leave your shame behind.
Momtaza Mehri is a poet, essayist and independent researcher. Her latest pamphlet, Doing the Most with the Least, was published by Goldsmiths Press.
1. Think of an abstraction.

2. Think of an image you associate with that abstraction.

3. Come up with a list of descriptions for the image.

4. Think of a second abstraction.

5. Think of an image you associate with that abstraction.

6. Come up with a list of descriptions for the image.

7. Start the poem with the line “I want to write more poems with [abstraction 1]” but use the descriptors for abstraction 2 (do not name the image).

8. Transition to the images of abstraction 1 (do not name the image) then end with the line “I want to write more poems with [abstraction 2]”

9. Play around/revise/read poem in reverse order
Rana Tahir is a poet and educator living in Portland, Or. She earned her MFA from Pacific University. She is a Kundiman Fellow and member of RAWI. www.rana-tahir.com
Write a poem in which you alienate the reader, whether through use of another language, an innovative form, or deviation from traditional syntax.
Mariam Gomaa is a physician and writer based in Washington, DC. She is the author of Between the Shadow & the Soul (Backbone Press). She holds an M.D. from Wake Forest University School of Medicine and a B.A. in Creative Writing and Biological Sciences from Northwestern University. Her writing has appeared in Time, NBC News, Doximity, Nimrod International Journal, Mizna, Rhino Poetry, Graze Literary Magazine, Readings for Diversity and Social Justice 4e, and more. She is a graduate of the Tin House 2022 Winter Workshop.
Write on who you are in the underworld. Ask, ‘who are you in the making of love?’ What are you naming yourself? Think in an imaginary hero’s journey—where are you? Who/what are you? What are you recovering/finding?
leena aboutaleb can be found resting in the sun somewhere in Amman
consider your body
as a topography
write its depths & heights
Samia Saliba (she/her) is an Arab-American writer & artist. She has edited for The Rachel Corrie Foundation’s Shuruq 4.5 Writing Showcase (2020) and Violet, Indigo, Blue, Etc. (2022), and has participated in workshops including RAWI Wet Hot Arab-American Summer (2019) and Tin House Winter Workshop (2022). Her work has been nominated for Best of the Net and appears in Sycamore Review, Vagabond City Lit, Kissing Dynamite, Mizna, & elsewhere. Find her on twitter @sa_miathrmoplis or in real life petting a cat.
Write a poem in which the speaker is the month of April responding to the line "April is the cruellest month" from T.S. Eliot's The Wasteland. The poem does not necessarily have to engage with the same themes as Eliot's poem but, for reference, here are the opening lines:

1. The Burial of the Dead April is the cruellest month, breeding Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing Memory and desire, stirring Dull roots with spring rain.
Sally Badawi is an Egyptian American writer and teacher whose words appear in Hayden's Ferry Review, Diode, Orange Blossom Review, and elsewhere. A BOTN and Pushcart Prize nominee, she currently serves as associate editor at Typehouse Magazine in the pacific northwest where she resides with her family.
Where does grief live in your body? If your grief could talk what would it say?
Noam Keim is a trans Jewish Arab who grew up in France and currently lives on Lenape land known as Philadelphia. They spend their days working to heal the trauma of prisons with people impacted by the legal system. They are a transformative justice practitioner, a student of somatic, a medicine maker, and they spend most of their time thinking about the in-betweens and interconnectedness of it all. They write a zine called The Land is Holy, and you can learn more about their work @thelandisholy (IG) or thelandisholy.com.
Take out an old family photo and address the people in it or have them speak. Write about what’s not in the frame. What happened before or after this picture was taken? What does the writer know now that the people in the photograph did not know then? Or try comparing two photographs—one past, one present. Consider what happened in the time between the two.
Threa Almontaser is the author of the poetry collection *The Wild Fox of Yemen* (Graywolf Press 2021), winner of the Walt Whitman Award from the Academy of American poets and nominated for the National Book Awards.
Write a ghazal that reflects the power of overlapping identities and expressions, considering its inspiration on your spirit.
Dania Ayah Alkhouli is a Southern California born & bred Syrian writer, poet, author, and real estate business manager. She holds a B.A. in Sociology, an M.P.A. in Public Policy & Administration, and is currently pursuing a Masters in Business Administration. In 2012, Alkhouli and her mother co-founded the nonprofit A COUNTRY CALLED SYRIA (@acountrycalledsyria), a traveling arts exhibition and set of events on the history, culture, and stories of their homeland, Syria. With over 500 artifacts directly from Syria, their goal is to establish a permanent exhibition in California. Alkhouli has authored three poetry books, with a fourth pending. Her latest release, CONTORTIONIST TONGUE, was published by Moon Tide Press in early 2020. Alkhouli’s written work centers on domestic violence/sexual assault, feminism, death & grief, religion, culture, and her homeland, Syria.
In her poem “Sanctuary,” Sholeh Wolpe writes that “Home is a missing tooth.” Consider what “home” means to you. Is it missing or present? If missing, is it retrievable? Are you creating or reimagining home? Is home on a map? Is your body your home? How else can you construct “home”? Write a poem about your perception of what home is/can be.
Zeina Azzam is a Palestinian American poet, editor, and community activist. Her poems appear in literary publications including Mizna, Sukoon, Pleiades, Cordite, Barzakh, and Gyroscope, and in anthologies such as Bettering American Poetry and Making Mirrors: Writing/Righting by Refugees. Zeina's chapbook, Bayna Bayna, In-Between, was published in 2021.
BEGIN BY DEEPLY INHALING A FAVORITE SPICE. LET IT LEAD BACK INTO MEMORY—OF A PARTICULAR HOLIDAY, AN EARLIER TIME, A RITUAL, THE PEOPLE WHO WERE AROUND YOU—OR MAYBE, A CERTAIN FOOD, WHO MADE IT, AND HOW
Lauren Camp is the author of five volumes of poetry, most recently Took House (Tupelo Press, 2020). Winner of the Dorset Prize, Lauren has also received fellowships from The Black Earth Institute and The Taft-Nicholson Center, and finalist citations for the Arab American Book Award, the Housatonic Book Award and the New Mexico-Arizona Book Award. Her work has been translated into Mandarin, Turkish, Spanish and Arabic. She lives in New Mexico. To learn more: www.laurencamp.com
Call a loved one & have a conversation. Write down a phrase they used during the call. Use their phrase as the title of your next poem.
Joumana Altallal is an Iraqi-Lebanese poet, researcher, and artist who was born in Baghdad and grew up in Charlottesville, Virginia. She received her M.F.A in Poetry at the University of Michigan's Helen Zell Writers' Program. Her recent work has appeared in The Rumpus, Muzzle Magazine, Michigan Quarterly Review, and Glass: A Journal of Poetry. You can find Joumana on Twitter @joualt, or by visiting www.joumanaaaltallal.com
Write a poem to carry with you
or to hang above your door.
A poem that protects and
intercedes. This poem is an
amulet you can take with you
for the journey. It can be any
length or form you choose
but should include
A word you love
to say out loud
An acknowledgement of
something broken
One rhyme (any kind)
that sings to you
The name of a place
where you feel safe
The poem should end on
hope (broadly defined)
LENA KHALAF TUFFAHA IS A POET, ESSAYIST, AND TRANSLATOR. HER FIRST BOOK OF POEMS, WATER & SALT, WON THE 2018 WASHINGTON STATE BOOK AWARD. SHE IS ALSO THE AUTHOR OF TWO CHAPBOOKS, ARAB IN NEWSLAND, WINNER OF THE 2016 TWO SYLVIA’S PRIZE, AND LETTERS FROM THE INTERIOR, FINALIST FOR THE 2020 JEAN PEDRICK PRIZE. TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HER WORK, VISIT WWW.LENAKHALAFTAFTUFFAHA.COM
A) Choose an image that interests you.

B) Write a Q&A with the creator of the image.

C) Use language from your interview to write an ekphrastic poem.
WRITE AN EKPHRASTIC 
POEM 
INTERACTING WITH THE FOLLOWING IMAGES:

18 YASMINE NASSER DIAZ
Yasmine Nasser Diaz is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice draws from nuanced, discordant, and evolving concepts of culture, class, gender, religion, and family. She uses mixed media collage, photo-based fiber etching, immersive installation, and video to explore connections between personal experience and larger social and political structures. Diaz is interested in complex narratives of third-culture identity, their precarious invisibility/hyper-visibility, and the friction often experienced between the individual and the collective.

Yasmine is a recipient of the Harpo Visual Artists Grant and the California Community Foundation Visual Artist Fellowship and has works included in the collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Arab American National Museum, and the University of California, Los Angeles. Her work has been featured in HyperAllergic, PBS NewsHour, ArtNet, and Artillery Magazine. She lives and works in Los Angeles.
Write a poem that’s cyclical in nature. For example, a word reappears with different meanings or in different forms. Elements of the poem repeat, or each stanza represents one part of a particular cycle (seasons, musical intervals, the water cycle, harvests, planetary cycles, economic cycles, etc.). The poem must have one interruption. Make sure the poem is not a form that already exists, though you can borrow elements that suit your purposes.
1) How can we define ourselves outside of the limits of the colonial construct while using the English language?

example: Deeply-rooted is an empowered word I have coined to describe any person or community rooted in an ancient culture steeped in traditional and Indigenous knowledge that colonization attempted to erase. It is a word that attempts to describe the multiplicity of ethnicities and experiences related to the international Indigenous, Black, Pan-African, Afro-descendant, Arab, Brown, Latinx, South American, and Asian communities.
2. Tell me a story about deep roots.
3. Imagine a world where colonialism never happened.
Sundus Abdul Hadi is an artist and writer. Born to Iraqi parents, she was raised and educated in Tiohtià:ke/Montréal, where she earned a BFA in Studio Arts and Art History and a MA in Media Studies. Sundus’ transmedia work is a sensitive reflection on trauma, struggle, and care. She is the author/illustrator of “Shams”, a children’s book about trauma, transformation and healing. Her book titled “Take Care of Your Self: The Art and Cultures of Care and Liberation” (Common Notions, Fall 2020) is about care, curation and community. She is the cofounder of We Are The Medium and the founder of Maktaba Bookshop opening in Spring 2022 in Montreal.
An aunt suddenly enters the room where you're writing. She smiles, puts a card in your hand, then leaves. What does it say? How do you answer the letter?
Micaela Kaibni Raen is a Palestinian-American poet and non-fiction writer. She has over 35 years of experience being a community organizer and international LGBT+ activist. Her work appears in Bint el Nas, Yellow Medicine Review, The Poetry of Arab Women, and more.
WERE YOU EVER TRULY A CHILD? DID YOU RUN BAREFOOT? IF YOU COULD RESTORE YOUR RIGHT TO A CHILDHOOD, WHAT WOULD IT LOOK LIKE?
Ashley is the great granddaughter of Armenian refugees who were migrant farm workers, eventually settling into rows of their own grape vines in the San Joaquin Valley of California. She now lives with her cat on the unceded territory of the Clackamas and Multnomah Chinookan people in what is known as Portland OR in the settler system. Ashley fell in love with writing at an early age, taking refuge in words to help process the world around her. Tracing her family tree back to its roots is a life long and healing passion that helps bring clarity to life in the diaspora. In her free time Ashley likes to knit and go on roadtrips.
Revisit your diary or a journal entry on a subject that, for you, hasn’t yet been resolved.

Transcribe the entry.

In it: read, dig, erase, sculpt away, and find the poem.

That is to say: conduct an erasure of your own journals.

Even amidst “the surpassing disaster” *, there is a volta, a seed, a turn. Find it.

It’s possible that the answers you need are already there, in your own words.

No need to adhere to rules of grammar.

Fragments, we know, can tell us much.

Optional: Keep the words exactly as they appear, and in their order of appearance.
* The surpassing disaster is a formulation from Jalal Toufic’s foundational essay, The Withdrawal of Tradition Past a Surpassing Disaster.
Kamelya Omayma Youssef is a writer from Dearborn, Michigan, with roots in Jibbayn and Shmistar, Lebanon. She is the author of a book with a hole in it (Wendy's Subway, 2022). With an MA in English from Wayne State University and an MFA in Poetry from New York University, she currently teaches poetry at the City College of New York, and co-facilitates Habibi Futurism, a generative workshop for collective futurist imaginings.
Solmaz Sharif ends the second poem in her book *Customs*, "Dear Aleph," with these lines: "David, / they tell me, is the one / one should aspire to, but ever since / I first heard them say Philistine / I've known I am Goliath if I am anything."

With this ending as a model for inspiration: Draft a poem in which you identify with or as someone considered a villain. It could be that you are (re)claiming the identity and re-shaping the narrative, or that you are sympathizing with the "villain", or using some aspect of the "villain" to tell your own story or own truth.

Exploring this connection to such a character: Do you--the speaker--feel guilty? Powerful? Resentful? Something else? Some combination?

Bonus round!: write the poem as a letter to someone.
Marlin M. Jenkins was born and raised in Detroit. The author of the poetry chapbook Capable Monsters (Bull City Press, 2020) and a graduate of University of Michigan's MFA program, his work has found homes with Indiana Review, The Rumpus, Waxwing, and Kenyon Review Online, among others. He currently lives and teaches in Minnesota.
You are an island with a sandy shore and palm trees. A human washes ashore. Describe what living with this new human is like. What do you provide for each other?

Michelle Zamanian
MICHELLE ZAMANIAN IS AN IRANIAN AMERICAN WRITER LIVING IN MINNESOTA. SHE IS THE EDITOR FOR WE ARE MORE AT THE RUMPUS. FIND HER ON TWITTER @MEZAMANIAN.
TURN YOUR BITTER (OR SORROW)

INTO ANGER INTO ACTION INTO JOY.
Feras Hilal is a brown queer Muslim Palestinian writer/performer

RAWI Board Member

Living on Cahuilla land
GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO BE OUT OF CHARACTER, BEHAVE POORLY, SPEW ONTO THE PAGE ANY NEGATIVITY BOTTLED INSIDE. WHAT SHOWS UP?
FERAS HILAL IS A BROWN QUEER MUSLIM PALESTINIAN WRITER/PERFORMER LIVING ON CAHUILLA LAND

RAWI BOARD MEMBER
FORAGE IN THE WILD FIELDS OF YOUR FUTURE. WHAT IS GERMINATING IN THAT LUSH SOIL, FED ONLY BY THE SKY?
PRISCILLA WATHINGTON IS A PALESTINIAN AMERICAN WRITER, EDITOR, AND HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATE. HER POEMS AND OTHER WRITINGS HAVE APPEARED IN GULF COAST, MICHIGAN QUARTERLY REVIEW, SALAMANDER, MATTER, THE NORMAL SCHOOL, MIZNA, SUKOON, ΔL JADID, AND +972 MAGAZINE, AMONG OTHERS. SHE LIVES IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA.
hit shuffle in your music library
then write a poem duetting
or responding
to the song that plays
Jess Rizkallah is a Lebanese-American writer and illustrator. Her full-length collection *The Magic My Body Becomes* was a finalist for the *Believer Poetry Award* and won the 2017 *Etel Adnan Poetry Prize*. She is a 2022 Mass Cultural Council Fellow.
"Soft-resetting" a video game involves hitting a specific combination of buttons in order to restart the game from your last save, often to fix a mistake. Write a poem in which you perform a "soft-reset." What do you have to do to get there? What are you doing over?
Summer Farah is a poet and editor who currently acts as the outreach coordinator for the Radius of Arab American Writers. In 2021, she served as the poetry editor for the FIYAH LIT Palestine Solidarity issue.